

An Exegesis of the Word *Bayān* (Exposition) in Verse 19 of Sura al-Qiyāma

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Abstract

Almost all Quranic exegetes believe that verses 16-19 of Sura al-Qiyāma are digressions between other main verses. While exegetes and lexicologists take the word *bayān* to mean an exposition or interpretation of Quranic verses, a distinction should be drawn between exposition and interpretation of the Quran. In verse 19 of the sura, the term “lie with Us” suggests God’s commitment to the expository revelation of Quranic verses, which the Prophet taught his companions, as he taught the Quran itself. What distinguishes Imam ‘Alī’s *Muṣḥaf* (written copy of the Quran) from ‘Uthmān’s *Muṣḥaf* is the addition of expository revelation alongside the Quranic verses. Since Imam ‘Alī’s *Muṣḥaf* were inherited by later Shiite Imams, their followers were not deprived of expository revelation.

Keywords: Sura al-Qiyāma, exposition, expository revelation, Quranic revelation, Imam ‘Alī’s *Muṣḥaf*.

Statement of the Problem

The Quran, as the word of truthful God (“and who is more truthful in speech than Allah?” [Q 4:87]), promises in verse 17 of Sura al-Qiyāma to gather and recite the Quran for the Prophet (“Indeed it is up to Us to put it together and to recite it”). Moreover, in verse 19, it promises to deliver its *bayān* (exposition) to the Prophet (“Then, its exposition [also] lies with Us”). There is a disagreement among intellectuals and Quranic exegetes, however, over what “exposition” means here. Having surveyed fifty-two Shiite exegeses and forty-five Sunni exegeses of the Quran as well as Arabic lexicons and Quranic translations, the views of Muslim scholars about the meaning of the word *bayān* in this verse can be recapitulated as follows:

1. *Bayān* means interpretation, explanation, elaboration, clarification, inspiration, and explication of the meanings of all Quranic verses to the Prophet.

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2. It means explanation and explication of parts of the Quran, which were abstruse to the Prophet.

3. It means the explication and explanation of the jurisprudential verses of the Quran to the Prophet.

4. The verse means that it is upon God to reveal the truths of the Quran to the Prophet.

5. The verse means that God explains the meanings of Quranic verses to people through the Prophet.

6. Some Quranic exegetes account for the connection between these verses and their antecedent and subsequent verses concerning the resurrection by interpreting this verse as a divine promise to the Prophet, which will be fulfilled on the day of resurrection.

7. Some Quranic exegetes interpret *bayān* as the revelation of the Quran in Arabic, because this language is expository to people.

There is another view of the meaning of *bayān* in the verse, which is not noted by Quranic exegetes: the verse “Then, its exposition [also] lies with Us” is an explication, interpretation, and explanation of all Quranic verses to the Prophet through “non-Quranic revelation” or “expository revelation.” In what follows, we see that this view develops from the above theories, and it can provide us with answers to many objections in Quranic sciences and exegetical ambiguities concerning Quranic verses.

There are questions about this verse, which Quranic exegetes do not often tackle: what is the meaning of “its exposition” (*bayānuh*) with regard to the Quran? What promise is made by the phrase “lie with US” (*‘alaynā*)? How is this promise fulfilled? What is the external manifestation of this promise? What is the fate of this exposition? What do Shiite and Sunni verses and hadiths say about this “expository revelation”? How do early works by Shiite and Sunni scholars address the non-Quranic expository revelation?

1. Critique of Views by Quranic Exegetes

The above-mentioned interpretations of *bayān* are subject to objections. The second and third views restrict the exposition to parts of the Quran that were abstruse to the Prophet or to jurisprudential rulings, but there is no reason for such restriction.

As for the first and fourth views, on which *bayān* is interpretation of the truths of the Quran, the following question arises: if God promised to reveal the exegesis of the Quran to the Prophet, as he revealed the Quran itself, then where is that exegesis or exposition of the truths? For the fifth, sixth, and seventh views, no evidence can be found inside the verse.

There are two accounts of verses 16-19 of Sura al-Qiyāma. On one view, these verses are connected to their antecedent and subsequent verses, and are indeed addressed to human beings on the day of resurrection (Najjarzadegan 1385 Sh, 17). This view is susceptible to objections: there are no hadiths that

confirm such an interpretation; there is no Quranic verse concerning the resurrection in which unbelievers and criminals are addressed in singular form, but they are always addressed in plural form, while the address in verses 16-19 is singular; according to the majority of Quranic exegetes, the context of verses 15-19 is incompatible with their antecedent and subsequent verses (Vahed Javan and Nikkooh 1395 Sh, 4-9). On the second view, which is the majority view among exegetes, these verses are indeed digressions between verses concerning the resurrection (Akhundi 1392 Sh, 18).

2. The Meaning of Expository Revelation

Expository revelation is an exposition of the Quran, which should be distinguished from Quranic interpretation or exegesis, since exposition of the Quran is exclusive to the Prophet, and it is concerned with disambiguation of Quranic ambiguities, restriction of unqualified Quranic statements, specification of exception cases for general statements, and so on. Quranic exegesis, on the other hand, is a further explanation of the *prima facie* denotations and implications of Quranic verses, which might sound abstruse to some people, rather than disambiguation, restriction, or specification. Moreover, Quranic exegesis is something that people other than the Prophet can do, as attested by the fact that dozens of Quranic exegesis were written by scholars from different literary, social, philosophical, theological, and other perspectives (Sharifi and Hedayati 1394 Sh, 48).

In addition to Quranic verses, which are referred to as *tanzīl* (gradual or piecemeal revelation) and are cited in Imam 'Alī's *Muṣḥaf* (written copy of the Quran), there are addenda on its margins, containing comments and explanations of the Quranic verses, which are called *ta'wīl* (interpretation).

Since early times, Shiite scholars were careful to show that the addenda of Imam 'Alī's *Muṣḥaf* were of the type of exegesis, interpretation, explanation, explication, specification of definitive and metaphorical verses, which constitute expository, as opposed to Quranic, revelation (Sharifi and Hedayati 1394 Sh, 48). Accordingly, in addition to the revelation of Quranic verses to the Prophet ("Quranic revelation"), which is available to us in 114 Quranic suras in the present *muṣḥaf*, an interpretation of Quranic verses was revealed to the Prophet, which al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq calls "revelation that is not the Quran" (*wahy lays bi-Qur'ān*) (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī 1371 Sh, 106-10) and al-Askari refers to as "expository revelation" (*al-wahy al-bayānī*) (Askari 1415 AH, 1:131). Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd argues that the Quran describes the non-Quranic or "expository" revelation also as the "Quran." That is, according to Q 20:114, the interpretation of Quranic verses, which is found in Imam 'Alī's *Muṣḥaf*, is also called the Quran ('Ukbarī al-Baghdādī 1413 AH, 93).

3. Quranic Evidence for Expository Revelation

There are several Quranic verses in which expository revelation of the Quran is contrasted to Quranic revelation.

(1) Alif, Lam, Mim, Ra. Those are the signs of the Book. And that which has been sent down to you from your Lord is the truth, but most people do not believe [in it] (Q 13:1).

There are exegetical disagreements over this verse. A survey of various Shiite and Sunni exegeses shows that it is an abstruse, obscure verse of the Quran. The verse points to two distinct things that are conjoined: “signs [verses] of the Book” and “that which has been sent down to you from your Lord.” Both of these are then described as “truths” (*haqq*), and then it is pointed out that most people do not believe in it.

Exegetical views of this verses can be classified as follows:

1. “Those are the signs of the Book” refers to verses of a whole sura or verses of the Quran (Sharīf al-Lāhījī 1373 Sh, 2:573).

2. The “book” in this verse refers to a Quranic sura. Thus, the verse refers to verses of a whole sura, and “And that which has been sent down to you from your Lord” refers to the whole Quran (Qummī al-Mashhadī 1368 Sh, 6:406).

3. “Those are the signs of the Book” means that the present sura (Sura al-Ra‘d) consists of Quranic verses and is not a fabrication of lies. “And that which has been sent down to you from your Lord” means that the whole Quran is divine revelation (Sabzawārī al-Najafī 1406 AH, 1:254).

4. “Those are the signs of the Book” refers to the verse “and it is sublime and wise with Us in the Mother Book” (Q 43:4), and “And that which has been sent down to you from your Lord” is the definitive book that is elaborated (Sadeghi Tehrani 1419 AH, 1:249).

5. The signs referred to by “Those” in the verse are the creatures in the external world, which are conquered in the divine order (Ṭabāṭabā‘ī 1374 Sh, 11:389).

6. “Those are the signs of the Book” refers to the verses of the Torah and the Gospel, and “And that which has been sent down to you from your Lord” points to the Quran (Ṭayyib 1378 Sh, 7:299).

7. “Those are the signs of the Book” refers to Quranic verses or the stories mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel (Ḥusaynī Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīmī 1363 Sh, 6:323).

8. Amīn Iṣfahānī believes that “And that which has been sent down” is either a conjunction of one adjective to another if the “Book” here refers to the whole Quran, or a conjunction of a specific instance to a general phrase if the “Book” refers to the sura (Amīn Iṣfahānī 1361 Sh, 7:5).

As for the views that interpret the “Book” as a Quranic sura, we might ask: Is there any other Quranic verse in which the word “book” means sura? Is there any evidence for this interpretation?

It seems that the verse refers to two truths that were revealed to the Prophet: the first is the Quranic that is available to us (“Quranic revelation”), which is noted in the verse “Those are the signs of the Book,” and the second is the expository revelation of the Quran, which is pointed out in “And that which is sent down to you.”

Among Sunni exegetes of the Quran, Sūrābādī says that “And that which is sent down to you” refers to the Quran as well as other traditions and knowledge that God taught the Prophet, as in a hadith from the Prophet “I was given the Quran and other similar things along with it” (Sūrābādī 1380 Sh, 2:1193). Among Shiite exegetes of the Quran, al-Sabzawārī al-Najafī writes in his *al-Jadīd fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-majīd*: “‘Those’ refers to the verses of the Quran. ‘And that which is sent down to you’ refers to the holy revelation, a truth from the Lord, the belief in which cannot be encroached upon. However, most people do not believe in its verses and evidence because of their misleading ignorance” (Sabzawārī al-Najafī 1419 AH, 4:101).

It is therefore inferred from this verse that, alongside Quranic revelation, expository revelation was sent to the Prophet, both of which are truths, although most people do not believe.

(2) Thus, we have sent it down as an Arabic Quran and We have paraphrased the warnings in it variously so that they may be Godwary, or it may prompt them to remembrance. So exalted is Allah, the True Sovereign. Do not hasten with the Quran before its revelation is completed for you, and say, ‘My Lord! Increase me in knowledge’ (Q 20:113-14).

Exegetes believe that the term “Quran” in “Thus We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran” means the revealed Quran; that is, the one that is available to us today (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1374 Sh, 14:299). Concerning the term “Quran” in “Do not hasten with the Quran,” there are three views propounded in Shiite and Sunni exegeses:

1. The “Quran” in verse 114 of Sura Ṭā-Hā also refers to the revealed Quran that is available to us. In this case, the verse asks the Prophet not to hasten in reciting a Quranic verse until it is fully sent down to him. In Shiite exegeses, this view is suggested by ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī in an exegesis attributed to him (Qummī 1367 Sh, 2:65; Ṭabarsī 1372 Sh, 7:52; and Bayḍāwī 1418 AH, 4:40).

2. The “Quran” in the verse refers to the one that is available to us, but the verse prohibits the Prophet from asking for revelation of verses. In this case, the verse asks the Prophet not ask for revelation of a verse about particular issues before God sends down verses to him (Sharīf al-Murtaḍā 1426 AH, 2:301).

3. The term “Quran” or “revelation” in the verse (“Do not hasten with the Quran before its revelation is completed for you”) refers to the exposition or interpretation of Quranic verses. Some Shiite and Sunni exegetes have proposed this interpretation.

Javadi Amoli believes that there are two varieties of revelation: Quranic revelation through which Quranic verses were sent down in the form of the book that is available to us today, and expository revelation that was delivered by Gabriel to the Prophet in interpretation and explication of Quranic verses (Javadi Amoli 1384 Sh, 168).

Expository revelation is what al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq refers to as “revelation that is not the Quran” (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī 1371 Sh, 84). In this way, when it is said in some hadiths that Quranic interpretation is collected in Imam ‘Alī’s *Muṣḥaf*, it means that the Imam had collected the themes and full explications of Quranic verses alongside the present Quran; that is, it involves specification of exception cases for general statements of the Quran, as well as restrictions of unqualified statements therein. These secrets were then presented by the Prophet to Imam ‘Alī. This is called Quranic interpretation, as the Prophet said: “my Lord bestowed upon me a rational heart and an interrogating tongue” (Ibn Shahrāshūb al-Māzandarānī 1379 Sh, 2:43).

In many cases, the Prophet initially taught Quranic interpretations to Imam ‘Alī, and in other cases, he did so in response to Imam ‘Alī’s questions. For this reason, the Imam said that he knew all the secrets of Quranic verses and the occasions of their revelation (Javadi Amoli 1384 Sh, 170).

On this account, expository revelation of the Quran is what appears in the margins of Imam ‘Alī’s *Muṣḥaf* as interpretation of Quranic verses. In this case, the term “revelation” in the above verse does not refer to the revelation of a heavenly book. In fact, the Quran uses the term “revelation” in reference to any secret conveyance of something to an audience. In this way, the “revelation” in the above verse need not be taken to mean the sending down of the Quran. Instead, it means expository revelation of the Quran, which is secretly conveyed to the Prophet.

As pointed out before, God revealed the meanings of verses to the Prophet, and the Prophet articulated those meanings in verbal forms, which constitute his tradition of hadiths (Askari 1415 AH, 1:259).

It should be noted that, given Q 20:114, alongside the Quranic revelation, God sent down the expository revelation to the Prophet, which he then taught Imam ‘Alī. The Imam collected those expositions in his *Muṣḥaf*, alongside the Quran itself. Thus, Imam ‘Alī’s *Muṣḥaf* included both Quranic and expository kinds of revelation.

(3) When Allah made a covenant with those who were given the Book: ‘You shall explain it for the people, and you shall not conceal it,’ they cast it behind their backs and sold it for a paltry gain. How evil is what they buy! (Q 3:187).

While exegetes believe that the verse concerns Jews or other peoples to whom a scripture was sent down and then they discarded it, al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq says in his book on Imami beliefs that when Imam ‘Alī presented his *Muṣḥaf* to the heads of the Islamic caliphate, he told them “This is the book of your Lord in accordance with what is revealed to your Prophet, without adding anything

to it or eliminating anything from it.” His audience, who had taken over the caliphate after the Prophet’s demise, told him that they would not need his *Muṣḥaf*, claiming that they had something similar to what he had at his disposal. Then, Imam ‘Alī turned away and recited the above verse: “hey cast it behind their backs and sold it for a paltry gain. How evil is what they buy!” (Q 3:187) (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qumī 1371 Sh, 106-10).

Imam ‘Alī’s citation of this verse could be construed in one of the following ways:

1. The act of his audience in rejecting his *Muṣḥaf* was an instance of this verse.

2. Their act was an interpretation of the meaning of this verse.

3. Imam ‘Alī practically interpreted the verse by reciting it in that context.

On each of these views, the meaning of the verse is closely tied to their act of rejecting his *Muṣḥaf*.

The above verse has several implications:

First, as for the verb *nabadh* (cast or throw away), al-Ṭurayḥī says that it originally means to cast or discard, as opposed to taking something as a model to be followed (Ṭurayḥī 1375 Sh, 3:189). In his *Lisān al-‘Arab*, Ibn al-Manzūr says that *nabadh* means to throw something away in front of one or to one’s back (Ibn al-Manzūr 1414 AH, 3:511; Farāhīdī 1410 AH, 8:191).

Second, they cast the Book of God not in front of them but in their backs (“they cast it behind their backs”) in exchange for an insignificant price.

Third, Imam ‘Alī had a divine obligation to present his *Muṣḥaf* to them. He reminded them of the covenant God made with them. This is confirmed by a hadith from Imam al-Ṣādiq cited in *Uṣūl al-kāfi*: “When ‘Alī completed the writing [of his *Muṣḥaf*], he presented it to people and told them: ‘This is the Book of God as it was sent down to Muḥammad, which I have collected between two tablets.’ People said: ‘We already have a *Muṣḥaf*, and we do not need yours.’ Imam ‘Alī replied, ‘I swear to God that you will never see it ever again. I had the obligation to present to you that I have collected’” (Kulaynī 1362 Sh, 2:633).

Fourth, God made a covenant with them to explain His Book to people and never conceal its truths, but they concealed it and never explained it. With the motto, “The Book of Allah is sufficient for us,” they rest content with the apparent words of the Quran, and with the motto, “purify the Qur’ān” (i.e., do not mix it with anything else; see Dhahabī 1419 AH, 1:7), they encroached upon the limits of the Quran and distorted it.

Fifth, by eliminating Quranic expositions and concealing its truths, they distorted the Quran by removing its necessary addenda.

On the one hand, this verse concerns the exposition and explanation of Quranic verses, which points toward expository revelation. On this verse, they cast the Book of God behind their backs and fell short of remaining committed to the covenant God made with them, failing to explain the Book of God to people. On the other hand, they collected a *Muṣḥaf* and asserted that “The Book

of Allah is sufficient for us.” Taken together, the two points imply that the part of the Quran, which was not explained and was indeed concealed, was not the Quran as available to us today, but its expository revelation.

Sixth, the verse says that God made a covenant with those to whom He had given the book (“those who were given the Book”). There is a difference between the term “Book” and the term “Quran.” When Imam ‘Alī presented his *Muṣḥaf*, he introduced it as the “Book of your Lord sent down to your Prophet” (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī 1371 Sh, 106-10). A book is a collection with a beginning and an end. It differs from the “Quran” in that the latter is a religious jargon referring to the whole or part of Quranic suras and verses, but when the term “book” is used to refer to the Quran, it refers to the entire Quran (Javadi Amoli 1384 Sh, 160).

According to Q 3:187 and the hadith from Imam ‘Alī, however, the Quran is called the “Book” when, in addition to Quranic revelation, it contains expository revelation. It follows that, in the language of Shiite Imams, the term “Book” is also a religious jargon; that is, a collection of Quranic revelation and expository revelation (i.e., the interpretation of the Quran).

Moreover, the collection presented by the Prophet was revealed just as the Quran was revealed to the Prophet. This implies that expository revelation was also sent down to the Prophet by God.

Seventh, let us generalize this notion of the “Book” to the Hadith of the Two Weighty Things (*Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn*). In this hadith, the Prophet says: “I leave two weighty things among you: the Book of God and my Household. They do not separate from each other until they visit me on the pond [on the day of resurrection]” (‘Ukbarī al-Baghdādī 1413 AH, 1:233; Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī 1378 Sh, 2:62).

In this hadith, “the Book of God” does not refer to what is available to us today. Instead, he means a collected book, consisting of both Quranic and expository varieties of revelation, which together constitute the Major Weighty Thing, just as “the Prophet’s Household” is not confined to the hadiths from Shiite Imams.

Eighth, the term “Quran” applies to all or parts of Quranic suras or verses. In this way, the entire *Muṣḥaf* that is available to us is the Quran, because it is part of the Book of God as a combination of Quranic and expository kinds of revelation.

Furthermore, expository revelation can be found in Q 55:4; 16:44 as well, as well as verses pertaining to Quranic exposition and explanation.

4. Expository Revelation in Shiite Hadiths

The claim that expository revelation was sent down to the Prophet is also evidenced by hadiths from Shiite Imams. Let us review some of these hadiths in what follows.

(1) In part of the forty-second supplication of *al-Ṣaḥifat al-Sajjādiyya*, the Fourth Shiite Imam, Zayn al-‘Ābidīn al-Sajjād, says: “O God, You sent it down upon Your prophet Muhammad (God bless him and his household) in concise form, You inspired him with the knowledge of its wonders to complement it, You made us the heirs of its knowledge as interpreters, You made us to surpass him who is ignorant of its knowledge, and You gave us strength over it to raise us above those not able to carry it” (Imam al-Sajjād 1418, 178).

In this passage, Imam al-Sajjād notes five points:

1. The Quran was sent down to the Prophet in concise form.
2. Wonders of the Quran were inspired to the Prophet in complementary form.
3. Knowledge of Quranic interpretation was inherited by the Infallible successors of the Prophet (namely, Shiite Imams).
4. The Prophet’s Household surpassed other people in virtue of this Quranic knowledge.
5. Their superiority over those lacking such knowledge was manifested in this way.

Obviously, Quranic verses were sent down to the Prophet in concise and ambiguous form, which is why they need interpreters. For example, verses such as “And maintain the prayer, and give the zakat” (Q 2:43) and “And it is the duty of mankind toward Allah to make pilgrimage to the House” (Q 3:97) are ambiguous verses that need to be interpreted. There are verses such as “O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you” (Q 4:59) and “and the tree cursed in the Quran” (Q 17:60) should be clarified by the Prophet and his successors (Burūjirdī, n.d., 43).

The above supplication by Imam al-Sajjād hints at the generality of Quranic verses and inspiration of the wonders of the Quran to the Prophet. Knowledge of such wonders that were “inspired” or revealed to the Prophet is the expository revelation of the Quran, which elaborates upon concise Quranic verses and provides interpretations.

In his book, *Burhān rawshan* (The clear proof), Mīrzā Mahdī Burūjirdī says that Imam ‘Alī’s *Muṣḥaf* was a comprehensive interpretation and explanation of concise and ambiguous verses of the Quran as well as unqualified, abrogated, and abrogating verses, all of which was taught by the Prophet. Imam ‘Alī presented the *Muṣḥaf* to the first and second caliphs after the Prophet’s demise. When they learned about its content, they realized that this would hinder their goals of ruling the Islamic nation. For this reason, they replied to Imam ‘Alī by saying that they did not need his book, and the book in their hand was sufficient for them. This is attested by Imam ‘Alī’s remark that “I presented to them a comprehensive book, including interpretation, and definitive, metaphorical, abrogating, and abrogated verses.” This is explicit that the book of interpretation was alongside the Quran, because of the term “include” (*mushtamil*) (Burūjirdī, n.d., 43-44).

In addition to the above supplication, there are other hadiths from which inferences can be made about the content of Imam ‘Alī’s *Muṣḥaf*.

- (1) Anas b. Mālik quoted the Prophet as saying: “O ‘Alī! You teach the interpretation of the Quran to people with what they do not know” (Burūjirdī, n.d., 196).
- (2) The Prophet said: “There is a person among you who fights over the interpretation of the Quran just as I fought over its revelation, and that person is ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib” (Burūjirdī, n.d., 204).
- (3) Al-Aṣḥab b. Nubāta quoted Imam ‘Alī as saying: “there is nothing you look for unless it is in the Quran. He who wants that ask me” (Burūjirdī, n.d., 183).
- (4) Al-Ḥusayn quoted his father Imam ‘Alī as saying that the Prophet told him: “O ‘Alī! You are my brother and I am your brother and I am chosen for prophethood and you are selected for imamate, and I am the owner of the revelation and you are the owner of the interpretation” (Burūjirdī, n.d., 188).
- (5) Abū Baṣīr quoted Imam al-Ṣādiq as saying: “We are the firm in knowledge and we know its [that is, the Quran’s] interpretation” (Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī 1409 AH, 7:179).
- (6) Imam al-Ṣādiq said: “We are the firm in knowledge: Amīr al-Mu’minīn [Imam ‘Alī] and the Imams (from his progeny)” (Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī 1409 AH, 7:179).
- (7) Imam al-Ṣādiq said: “‘The one who had knowledge of the Book said...’ [Q 27:40]. I swear to Allah that we are those who have knowledge of the entire Book” (Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī 1409 AH, 7:179).
- (8) Imam al-Ṣādiq said: “I swear to Allah that all knowledge of the Book is at our disposal” (Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī 1409 AH, 7:179).
- (9) Abū l-Ṣabāḥ said: “I swear to Allah that Ja‘far b. Muḥammad [Imam al-Ṣādiq] told me: ‘Verily, God taught the revelation and interpretation to His Prophet, and the Apostle of God taught it to ‘Alī,’ and then said, ‘he taught us, I swear to Allah’” (Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī 1409 AH, 7:182).
- (10) Imam al-Ṣādiq said: “Verily, God taught the legitimate and illegitimate to His Apostle, and the Apostle of God taught the entire knowledge to ‘Alī” (Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī 1409 AH, 7:199).
- (11) Imam al-Ṣādiq said: “in the word of God the transcendent “The one who had knowledge of the Book,” this is us, and the first among us is ‘Alī. (Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī 1409 AH, 7:200).

There are many similar hadiths in which the Imams’ knowledge of Quranic interpretation is asserted.

5. Instances of Expository Revelation

As pointed out above, Imam ‘Alī’s *Muṣḥaf* include both the present text of the Quran and expository revelation, which he had learned from the Prophet and wrote them in the margins.

Imam ‘Alī bequeathed the *Muṣḥaf* as a heritage of Imamate to generations of his progeny. Today, the *Muṣḥaf* is at the disposal of Imam al-Mahdī, the Twelfth Shiite Imam. According to the Hadith of Tents (*Fasāṭīṭ*), Imam al-Mahdī will teach expository and Quranic kinds of revelation.

In his book on Imami beliefs, al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq mentions instances of expository revelation, which he refers to as “revelation that is not the Quran”:

- Gabriel told the Prophet: “Your Lord tells you, ‘O Muḥammad! Be patient with people as I am patient with you.’”

- Gabriel told the Prophet: “Avoid hostility towards people.”

- “Live as long as you want since you will finally die and love whatever you want since you will finally lose it and do whatever you want since you will finally face up to your deed. The believer’s nobility lies in the Night Prayer and the believer’s dignity is to refrain from hurting others.”

- The Prophet said: “Gabriel always recommended me to brush my teeth such that I feared that my teeth would fall. He recommended it so much that I thought I was an obligation upon me. Gabriel always recommended me to behave well towards my neighbor such that I thought the neighbor would inherit me. He always recommended to be behave well towards women until I thought one should not divorce his wife. He always recommended to behave well towards slaves until I thought a time would be determined for his emancipation.”

- Gabriel told Muḥammad after the Battle of the Trench: “O Muḥammad! Verily, God commands you to perform the Afternoon Prayer with Banū Qurayza.”

- The Prophet said: “God always commanded me to be patient with people just as He commanded the performance of obligations.”

- The Prophet said: “We, the prophets, are commanded to talk to people to the degree of their reason.”

- The Prophet said: “God sent down Gabriel to me. My eyes were illuminated with him and my heart was delighted by seeing him. He said, ‘your Lord says that ‘Alī is the commander of the believers and the leader of those with white hands and legs.’”

- The Prophet said: “Gabriel came to me and said, ‘O Muḥammad! From above His Throne, God married Fāṭima to ‘Alī and took the angels to testify for that. Make them married on the earth and take the best of your people to testify for that.’”

There are many such hadiths, all of which are non-Quranic revelations. Imam ‘Alī collected them and presented them to the Islamic nation as a book

revealed by God to the Prophet, without any additions or eliminations. However, they told the Imam that they did not need it since the book of God they had in their hands was sufficient. The Imam then recited the verse, “they cast it behind their backs and sold it for a paltry gain. How evil is what they buy!” (Q 3:187) (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī 1371 Sh, 106-10).

According to al-Askari, expository revelation is what God revealed to the Prophet in explanation of the Quranic verses. For instance, the Quranic verse on *tayammum* (ritual ablution with stone), “then make your ablution on clean ground and wipe a part of your faces and your hands” (Q 4:43), was accompanied with expository revelation to the effect that this should be performed on the whole hand. This was conveyed by the Prophet to his companions, along with the Quranic revelation. As another example, in the verse, “O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord [on ‘Alī], and if you do not, you will not have communicated His message, and Allah shall protect you from the people. Indeed Allah does not guide the faithless lot” (Q 5:67). He thus added the phrase “on ‘Alī” in this verse, and this was how the verse was recited by his companions. Accordingly, in the periods of the Prophet, his companions, and the Shiite Imams, the Quran was taught along with its interpretation. According to a hadith by Ibn al-Mas‘ūd, the verse was accompanied by the phrase “on ‘Alī.” Another hadith asserts that, in Ubayy b. al-Ka‘b’s recitation of the Quran, the verse appears with this phrase (Askari 1415 AH, 3:197-98).

On this account, the Quranic revelation of the Quran is the text available to all Muslims today, and its expository revelation is the interpretation transmitted from the Prophet’s companions and the Shiite Imams, which is in turn derived from divine revelation. This means that exegetical or jurisprudential hadiths from the Shiite Imams count as revelation, albeit of an expository kind (Abedi 1387 Sh, 59).

Conclusion

The term *bayānuh* (its exposition) in verses 16-19 of Sura al-Qiyāma (which are digressions of their antecedent and subsequent verses) refers to expository revelation, which was sent down alongside the Quranic revelation to the Prophet, who then taught them to his companion Imam ‘Alī. What appeared in Imam ‘Alī’s *Muṣḥaf* was Quranic interpretation based on the truths of revelation, which is removed from the present *Muṣḥaf*. This content was not God’s words as a Quranic miracle. Instead, it was a “non-Quranic” variety of revelation. Evidence for expository revelation can be found in the Quran (Q 13:1; 20:114; 53:4; 3:187; 55:4; 16:44) and verses pertaining to Quranic exposition and explanation.

Imam ‘Alī said that he presented to people a comprehensive book, including Quranic interpretation, its definitive and metaphorical verses, as well as

abrogating and abrogated verses. These words are explicit that his *Muṣḥaf* was a book of Quranic interpretation, alongside the text of the Quran. The addenda in his book constituted what we call “expository revelation,” which he had learned from the Prophet.

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